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ABSTRACT

This paper provides teacher organizations with an overview of online education issues and research. The first section defines online education. The second section summarizes reasons for the expansion of online education. The third section looks at the nature and extent of online education in Canada and the United States. The fourth section discusses research issues, and the fifth section suggests areas for further research. The sixth section examines some of the trends and issues in online education at both the postsecondary and K-12 levels, including disaggregation and deprofessionalization, concerns about equity and socialization, technology costs, the technology-privatization-commercialization nexus, and a 2001 Canadian Teachers' Federation survey on online education. The seventh section provides examples of policies and principles drawn from educators' organizations, intended to inform policy development, the implementation and practice of online learning, the collective bargaining process, and general thinking about online education. The eighth section presents a plea for critical and creative thinking about the role of technology in the classroom. (Contains 90 references.) (MES)

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